



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 118617

DfES Number: 522692

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 27/10/2003
Inspector Name Amanda Joy

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones
Setting Address Ardleigh Green Road
Hornchurch
Essex
RM11 2LL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Havering College of Further And Higher Education

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Havering College of Further And Higher Education
Address Ardleigh Green Road
Hornchurch
Essex
RM11 2LL

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery opened in 1991. It operates from a purpose built portacabin on the premises of Ardleigh Green College in Havering. The premises consists of four main playrooms, one main kitchen, a milk kitchen adjacent to the baby room, children's bathroom and an office. There is access to a fully enclosed garden which has a grassed area as well as a concrete area. The nursery serves HSBC bank staff, college staff, students and the local community.

There are currently 63 children from 3 months to 4 years on roll. This includes 16 funded three-year-olds, no funded 4 year olds are currently attending. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week for 51 weeks of the year and is open from 07.45 to 18:15.

Twelve full-time staff work with children. Most staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Ardleigh Green) provides good care for the children.

All aspects of the provision are well organised, staff are very clear about their individual responsibilities as well as working effectively as part of a team to ensure the smooth running of the nursery. Staff have the opportunity to attend training although this has been limited due to staff changes. There are good recruitment, vetting and induction procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. All of the appropriate documentation was in place.

High priority is given to children's safety both in and out of the nursery including outings. The staff are guided by clear policies and procedures which are updated on

a regular basis, these include regular risk assessments. A good standard of hygiene is observed at all times with staff having designated areas of responsibility to ensure standards are maintained. There is good supervision of children and in the main the premises and equipment were safe.

The staff plan and provide a varied curriculum throughout the nursery to meet the individual needs of the children, activities are varied and fun. A good range of play equipment covering all areas of development is available to the children on a daily basis. Staff play an encouraging role in supporting children's learning, children with special needs are also well supported and fully included in all activities.

There is a good partnerships with parents and carers, their input is valued and encouraged. They are provided with clear information including newsletters, policies and procedures. Staff ensure they speak to parents daily about their child's welfare and development, parents are welcome to view children's developmental progress sheets at any time, Daily record sheets are completed by staff but would benefit from further detail.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection it was agreed that Ofsted is to be notified of new staff, staff are not left alone with children until relevant checks have been undertaken and to ensure the battery for the alarm in the fire door was replaced, all actions have been addressed.

What is being done well?

- An effective key worker system is in operation. Staff have good relationships with the children and know them well, they support and encourage children's learning in all areas. Children were confident and happy in their surroundings. (Standard 3)
- Provision for children with special needs is good, in addition to the SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) there is also a support worker. Both members of staff work closely together and with parents and other professionals to ensure children's needs are met. (Standard 10)
- Children's behaviour is managed in an appropriate positive manner which is very effective. Staff talk to the children warmly and with respect, children respond well to staff who are positive role models. (Standard 11)
- Partnerships with parents is very good, staff make every effort to ensure parents feel welcome within the nursery and ensure communication regarding their child's day is shared daily. (Standard 12)

What needs to be improved?

- children's safety regarding the use of the slide and access to cleaning equipment.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
6	ensure that the slide is made safe
6	ensure that the large cleaning equipment (e.g.mops and buckets) remain inaccessible to children

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery provides a happy and welcoming environment where children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They are making very good progress in the area's of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff plan a wide range of interesting and appropriate practical activities and understand what children learn from them. There is a good balance of adult directed and child directed activities and teaching methods motivate, support and develop children's learning. The children behave well in response to the high expectations of staff. Children with special needs are well supported by staff who work closely with parents and health professionals to ensure children's individual needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery is very good. Staff have annual appraisals and there is a commitment to ongoing training and development. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. Staff are closely involved in general planning and there are systems in place to monitor and evaluate children's progress.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Settling in procedures are effective and parents are well informed about routines, activities and the curriculum. There are satisfactory systems in place to ensure parents receive information about the children's general progress. However, opportunities for parents to contribute to assessments and receive detailed, ongoing information about their child's educational progress is limited.

What is being done well?

- Opportunities for children to have personal independence, select resources for themselves and work independently are excellent. They are confident, have good relationships with adults and each other and enjoy helping with tasks e.g. setting the table, choosing the number, shape or colour of the day and visiting the cook to find out what is for lunch.
- Very good use is made of books, story time and group activities to encourage the children to talk and interact, enjoy stories, rhymes and discussions.
- Staff create a well planned, stimulating environment where children learn through a wide range of practical activities. Good use is made of the compact play space available.
- Teaching methods encourage children to further develop their thinking and understanding.

What needs to be improved?

- The opportunities for children to further develop their mathematical understanding through problem solving in everyday activities.
- The opportunities for parents to contribute to assessments and receive more detailed information about their child's progress towards the early learning goals.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection there were 5 key issues for actions:

1. Review the staff's management of behaviour within the nursery, to ensure a consistent and positive approach is reliably employed.

The management of children's behaviour procedure has been updated since the last inspection. Children's behaviour is managed in a positive and consistent way.

2. Ensure that labelling throughout the nursery reflects the appropriate and accurate use of upper and lower case letters.

Labelling in the three to four year old children's base room is now correctly written.

3. Provide more opportunities for children to use a wider range of three-dimensional media, to encourage their exploration of shape and form and their model making skills.

Children have regular opportunities to explore shape and form and model make using construction kits. A junk modelling activity using recyclable materials is organised once a month.

4. Establish a clear link between the useful documentation in the children's records and further planned activities, to ensure that the children's individual learning needs are acknowledged and met.

Planning and children's individual assessment records are used to meet children's learning needs.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. They are interested and motivated to learn and are encouraged to be independent and persist with difficult tasks. Children are able to select resources and activities for themselves and enjoy helping with tasks throughout the day.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. They speak confidently and engage readily with adults and each other. There are frequent opportunities for children to enjoy books, stories and rhymes. A favourite story is 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Children have good opportunities to develop their hand eye co-ordination and writing skills through their play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children make generally good progress in this area. They can recognise numerals one to ten, confidently count to ten and enjoy joining in with number rhymes and songs. Children can name and match basic shapes and enjoy choosing the number and shape of the day. However children do not always use mathematical language to solve problems in everyday situations e.g. how many knives/forks are needed to set the table at lunchtime.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are making generally good progress in this area. They have regular access to construction kits, different tools and the computer. Children speak naturally about past and present events in their lives and enjoy sharing their news. Children find out about their environment through topic work e.g. 'where we live'. A good range of activities and resources are provided to help children learn about the wider world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's progress in this area is generally good. They move confidently and access activities and equipment easily. Children learn about the importance of keeping healthy through topic work and as part of every day routines and activities e.g. hand washing. They have daily access to an outdoor play area and regular access to resources that help them further develop their physical skills e.g. slide, climbing frame, trampoline.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
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Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's progress in this area is generally good. There is a balance of adult directed and free choice creative activities. Children are able to sing songs from memory and have regular opportunities to use their imagination through role play.
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Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Provide more frequent opportunities for children to further develop their mathematical understanding through problem solving in everyday situations.
- Provide more opportunities for parents to contribute to assessments and receive more detailed information about their child's progress towards the early learning goals.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.